

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the issues raised in the above referenced Office Action is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' representative thanks the Examiner for the courtesy extended during telephone interviews on February 3 and February 7, 2005 regarding the rejections based on Ament, and specifically with respect to Applicants' Claim 13. No agreement was reached. The Examiner's interpretation of the structure in Figure 6 of Ament, however, was more clearly defined.

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowable subject matter in Claims 8, 17, 20 and 21. Independent Claim 1 has been amended to include the features of cancelled dependent Claim 8. Therefore, independent Claim 1, and Claims 2-6 and 9-12 dependent therefrom, are now in allowable form. Only Claim 1 has been amended. Thus the amendment reduces the number of claims and issues remaining in the application. Entry of the amendment is respectfully requested.

The rejection of Claims 13-16 and 18 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Ament, U.S. Patent No. 5 618 077 has been considered.

Ament discloses a roller cover 8 that covers the baggage space of a station wagon. The roller cover has an elongated housing 11 to support a winding shaft 14 carrying a web 16 rotatably supported therein. Cup-shaped end caps 19 are spring-biased outwardly from the main body of the housing 11.

The side walls of the rear part of the Ament vehicle include receiving pockets 9 that receive the end caps 19 of the housing. Each end cap is spring biased outwardly and thus compressed inwardly as the rounded bottom edges of the end cap 19 are inserted into the opposing receiving pockets 9 in the side walls 48 of the car body.

In Figure 6 of Ament, the car body includes a rib 71 mounted on the side wall and projecting into the receiving pocket. The rib 71 includes rest recesses 91. The end cap 19 has a groove 76 corresponding to the rib 71 for mating

therewith. The end cap 19 also includes side locks 81 spaced from each other that project inwardly and are biased by springs 79. The side locks 81 are not fixed in place or actuated in any manner. The side locks are simply biased to move in an inward direction to mate with the laterally oriented recesses 91 of the rib 71.

Applicants' independent Claim 13, which corresponds to at least the embodiments in Applicants' Figures 4 and 5, recites "an operating device for controlling linear movement of said main lock outwardly from said locking device and for controlling subsequent outward movement of said side lock from said main lock". This feature is not present in Ament. Ament discloses the locking slider/lever 36 which enters the groove 91 in order to provide a locking effect. This element is controlled by knob 46 to enable removal of the end cap 19 by vertical lifting thereof. In the Office Action, the first lock comprises the end cap 19. The end cap of Ament does not have an actuator, but is merely manually lifted out by an upward force applied by the user to the end cap or the body of the cover. Therefore, Ament does not disclose or suggest an actuator that controls both linear movement of a main lock outwardly and subsequent outward movement of a side lock from the main lock.

Moreover, Ament does not disclose "controlling subsequent outward movement of said side lock from said main lock". As illustrated in Figure 6, the locking slider/lever 36 of Ament simply moves inwardly inside of the end cap 19 to mate with the rib 71. There is no disclosure or suggestion of the locking slider/lever 36 moving outwardly from the end cap 19.

In the Office Action, the end cap 19 is considered to be a main lock that is spring biased outwardly to lock in the receiving socket 9 in the side wall 48. Applicants consider the end cap 19 placed in the receiving socket 9 as simply mounting the roller cover without a locking effect. In use, the spring mounted end cap 19 can simply be lifted upwardly and removed from the receiving pocket 9 by applying a minimal

force that overcomes the resistance to lateral movement of the side wall 28 of the end cap 19 against the side wall 48 of the receiving pocket 9.

For the above reasons, independent Claim 13, and Claims 14-16 and 18 dependent therefrom, are distinguishable over Ament.

Claim 15 recites "said first side lock being movable outwardly in a linear direction opposite to a linear direction of movement outwardly of said second side lock". This arrangement differs from the arrangement in Figure 6 of Ament which shows side locks 81 both moving in an inward direction and a separate locking slider 36 which also moves in an inward direction and thus not outwardly, much less outwardly in a linear opposite direction. Therefore, Claim 15 further distinguishes Ament.

The rejection of Claim 19 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Ament has been considered.

Applicants' Claim 19 recites, among other features, a fixed retaining device having "an opening that includes therein first, second and third recesses, the second and third recesses facing each other". It is unclear how the structure illustrated in Figure 6 of Ament provides this relationship, as the recesses 91 extend into the rib and thus do not face each other.

Claim 19, which corresponds to Applicants' Figure 3, further recites "first, second and third locks located within the housing for projecting outwardly from the housing". As discussed above, the side locks 81 and locking slider 36 of Ament all project inwardly into a groove 76 in the end cap 19.

Claim 19 further recites "said second and third locks projecting outwardly in opposing directions to mate with the second and third recesses". As discussed above, Ament discloses side locks 81 that project inwardly in the same direction.

Finally, Claim 19 recites "an operating device for controlling linear movement of said locks outwardly from said

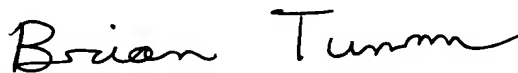
housing". As discussed above, in Ament the actuator for operating device 46 only controls the single locking slider/lever 36.

For the above reasons, reconsideration and allowance of Claim 19 is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-6 and 9-21 is respectfully requested.

Further and favorable reconsideration is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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